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General Assembly

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Seventy-second session

Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the seventy-second session

Observer status in the General Assembly for the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean

Letter dated 5 October 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to write to you in connection with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which provides for the possibility of including additional items of an important and urgent character on the agenda of the Assembly during a regular session.

Accordingly, I have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the seventy-second session of an additional item entitled "Granting observer status in the General Assembly to the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean".

In accordance with the provisions of rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the following are annexed to this letter: an explanatory memorandum (see annex I); a draft resolution (see annex II); and the Agreement Establishing the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (see annex III*).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Sacha **Llorentty Solíz**
Permanent Representative

* Annex III is being circulated in the languages of submission only and without formal editing.

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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

Observer status for the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean

The present document explains why the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean should be granted observer status by the United Nations.

The explanation is structured as follows:

1. Nature of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean

2. Membership

3. Operating structure

4. Headquarters agreement

5. Functions

6. Spheres of action

7. Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean: an observer of the Green Climate Fund and the Andean Community

8. Alignment with the United Nations and the Development Agenda

1. Nature of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean

The Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean is an international organization governed by public law and was created on 24 July 1992 by the Second Ibero-American Conference of Heads of State and Government, held in Madrid. The Fund was established to support the processes of self-development and the promotion of rights for local communities, indigenous peoples and their organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean. The governing organs and functions of the Fund are based on parity relations between the States and indigenous peoples.

The Agreement Establishing the Fund was deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on 4 August 4 1993, with registration number 30177.

In 2006, the Heads of State and Government attending the Sixteenth Ibero-American Conference held in Montevideo, decided to commit to consolidation of the Fund as the only international organization specialized in promoting development with identity and focused on the good living (living well) of indigenous peoples and on the recognition of their individual and collective rights.

The Mission of the Fund is to promote good living (living well) as an alternative and dignified life for the peoples, nationalities and indigenous communities of Latin America and the Caribbean, through the full exercise of human and collective rights and with interculturalism as a form of coexistence, which generates equality of opportunities and overcomes all forms of exclusion and domination, developing capacities for technical and political facilitation of the processes of dialogue between States and the leadership of indigenous peoples.

The vision of the Fund is that indigenous peoples are recognized and respected in the full exercise of their rights, cultures and identities and have robust organizations with administrative, technical, economic, political, social and cultural capacities that have been strengthened through their own processes of sustainable development, and that, in intercultural coexistence, they place their identities in the development and the economic and democratic management of the nation States of Latin America.

2. Membership

The Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean has 22 members that are States Members of the United Nations:

- 19 States of Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).
- 3 extra-regional States: Belgium, Portugal and Spain.

3. Operating structure

a. Parity structure of the governing bodies

One of the unique characteristics of the Fund is the parity of its governing bodies, which include representatives of indigenous peoples and the Governments of the member States and which have full capacity to make decisions about the future of the institution and its work.

General Meeting

This is the highest governing body, made up of governmental delegates from 22 member States and 18 representatives of indigenous peoples from the member States of Latin America and the Caribbean. The General Meeting is convened every two years to define policies and institutional strategies, and is convened in a special session when necessary.

Board of Directors

This collegiate body is responsible for governing the Fund and is composed of twelve members: six representatives of the indigenous peoples and six government representatives of the member States. The Board of Directors has a Chair and two Vice-Chairs, one of the latter being the representative of an extra-regional State.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is composed of the Chair and the two Vice-Chairs of the Board of Directors, which tasks the former with the consideration, approval and monitoring of the institutional operations provided for in the guidelines and plans approved by the General Meeting and the Board of Directors of the Fund.

b. Consultative bodies

The Fund facilitates the functioning and gathers proposals and views that guide the work of subsidiary bodies, called consultative bodies, which manage consultation processes among indigenous peoples, Governments and international

cooperation agencies, in order to define policies and coordinate agendas in an autonomous, bilateral or trilateral manner.

c. Technical Secretariat of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean

The Technical Secretariat consists of a highly qualified technical team; it constitutes the operational branch which is responsible for the technical and administrative management of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Technical Secretary, who is appointed by the Board of Directors after a competitive and transparent selection process, is responsible for leading and ensuring the correct functioning of this body.

4. Headquarters agreement

In 1993, the headquarters agreement on immunities, exemptions and privileges of the Fund was signed by the then President of the Board of Directors of the Fund and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and the city of La Paz (Bolivia) was designated as its headquarters.

5. Functions

- Serve as an intercultural and consultation forum for dialogue to support the processes of self-development of indigenous peoples.
- Provide assistance to States for the formulation of public policies that benefit indigenous peoples.
- Manage, channel and administer financial and technical resources for the implementation of priority projects and programmes that contribute to the self-development of indigenous peoples.
- Respect, promote and encourage the full recognition and exercise of the economic, social, cultural, political and environmental rights of indigenous peoples.

6. Spheres of action

The Fund seeks to contribute to the establishment of parity relations between States and indigenous peoples in order to support the exercise of their rights and interculturality.

To this effect, the Fund works in three areas.

- Dialogue and consultation: for the design, adoption and implementation of public policies to uphold the rights of indigenous peoples.
- Economic development with identity: in order to recognize and activate within the economic system the value of the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples.
- Education for equity: to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders to operate and prosper in an intercultural system and strengthen the capacities of indigenous peoples to have an impact and to exercise their rights.

7. Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean: an observer of the Green Climate Fund and the Andean Community

- By Decision B.08/20 of the Accreditation Council of Observer Organizations of the Green Climate Fund, dated 30 August 2017, the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean was accredited in this capacity.
- The Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean was granted observer status with the Consultative Council of Indigenous Peoples of the Andean Community on 26 September 2007, according to Decision No. 674.

8. Alignment with the United Nations and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The purposes and principles of the Fund are consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, particularly its article 1.2, which refers to developing "relations of friendship among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples ...".

The mission and vision of the Fund maintain the holistic approach of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals.

Since its creation in July 1992, the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean has supported regional processes of dialogue and consultation that have led to significant progress in a number of areas, including: the recognition, protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples in the member States; training and professional development of indigenous and non-indigenous leaders and authorities; the allocation of pre-investment or leverage resources for indigenous programmes and projects; and the development of appropriate methodologies for the management of development with identity in the region.

The Fund has implemented eight emblematic programmes with significant regional impact in the following areas: consultation processes, indigenous peoples' rights, intercultural indigenous peoples' university, development with identity, indigenous women, communication and information, indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and at risk of extinction, and indigenous youth.

After 25 years, the Fund is carrying out its work in the context of the adoption and full effect of instruments that support the rights of indigenous peoples, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007); the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2016); the mandates issued by the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples; the Sustainable Development Goals; and the need to support regional and national processes so that indigenous peoples can fully exercise and enjoy their rights.

In recent years, significant contributions have been made to the work of the Fund by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.

One of the recommendations made in the report on the sixteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (see E/2017/43-E/C.19/2017/11) is that "The Permanent Forum notes the work of the Fund for the Development of

Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC) as a regional mechanism to provide support to indigenous peoples. The Forum encourages Member States to strengthen the institutional framework of FILAC and to create similar bodies in other regions of the world".

Finally, the adoption 10 years ago of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has given the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean the necessary impetus to implement programmes focused on the rights recognized in the Declaration.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean,

1. *Decides* to invite the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the action necessary to implement the present resolution.

Annex III

Agreement Establishing the Fund for the development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean

The High Contracting Parties,

Meeting in the city of Madrid, Spain, on the occasion of the Second Ibero-American Summit, held on 23-24 July 1992,

Recalling the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a/ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, b/

Considering the international norms set forth in the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of the International Labour Organisation, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1989,

Hereby adopt, in the presence of representatives of indigenous peoples of the region, the following Agreement establishing the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Article 1
Purpose and functions

1.1 Purpose. The purpose of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, hereinafter referred to as the "Indigenous Fund", is to establish a mechanism for supporting the processes of self-development of indigenous peoples, communities and organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean, hereinafter referred to as "indigenous peoples".

The term "indigenous peoples" shall mean indigenous peoples descended from populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present State boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions. In addition, self-identification as indigenous shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Agreement apply.

The use of the term "peoples" in this Agreement shall not be construed as having any implications as regards the rights which may attach to the term under international law.

1.2. Functions. In order to achieve the purpose set forth in paragraph 1.1 of this article, the Indigenous Fund shall have the following basic functions:

(a) To provide a forum for dialogue to reach agreement on the formulation of development policies, technical assistance operations and programmes and projects of interest to indigenous peoples, with the participation of Governments of States of the region, Governments of other States, agencies providing resources and indigenous peoples themselves;

(b) To channel financial and technical resources to priority projects and programmes agreed upon with indigenous peoples, making sure that they help create conditions for the self-development of those peoples;

(c) To provide training resources and technical assistance to support institution-building, management capacity, human resources training, information resources and research for indigenous peoples and their organizations.

Article 2
Members and resources

2.1. Members. The members of the Indigenous Fund shall be those States which deposit the instrument of ratification with the Secretariat of the United Nations, in accordance with their domestic constitutional requirements and in conformity with paragraph 14.1 of article 14 of this Agreement.

2.2. Resources. The resources of the Indigenous Fund shall consist of contributions by member States, contributions by other States, public or private multilateral, bilateral or national agencies and institutional donors and net income generated by the activities and investments of the Indigenous Fund.

2.3. Instruments of contribution. The instruments of contribution shall be protocols signed by each member State and establishing their respective commitments to contribute resources to the Indigenous Fund to form the capital of that Fund, in accordance with paragraph 2.4 below. Other contributions shall be governed by the provisions of article 5 of this Agreement.

2.4. Nature of contributions. Contributions to the Indigenous Fund may be made in foreign currency, local currency, technical assistance or in kind, in accordance with the rules and regulations laid down by the General Meeting. Contributions in local currency shall be subject to maintenance of their value and exchange rate.

Article 3
Organizational structure

3.1. Organs of the Indigenous Fund. The organs of the Indigenous Fund shall be the General Meeting and the Board of Directors.

3.2. General Meeting.

(a) Composition. The General Meeting shall be composed of:

(i) One Government-accredited delegate for each member State; and

(ii) One indigenous peoples' delegate for each State of the region that is a member of the Indigenous Fund, accredited by his Government following the relevant consultations with the indigenous organizations of that State.

(b) Decisions

(i) Decisions shall be taken by unanimous affirmative vote of delegates of States of the region that are members of the Indigenous Fund, together with a majority of affirmative votes of representatives of other member States and a majority of affirmative votes of delegates of indigenous peoples;

(ii) On matters affecting indigenous peoples of one or more countries, the affirmative vote of their delegates shall also be required.

(c) Rules of Procedure. The General Meeting shall lay down its rules of procedure and such other rules and regulations as it deems necessary for the functioning of the Indigenous Fund.

(d) The General Meeting shall have the following functions, among others:

(i) To formulate the overall policy of the Indigenous Fund and to adopt such measures as are necessary for the fulfilment of its objective;

(ii) To approve the basic criteria for the preparation of plans, projects and programmes to be supported by the Indigenous Fund;

(iii) To approve membership status, in accordance with the stipulations of this Agreement and such rules and regulations as may be established by the General Meeting;

(iv) To approve the annual programme and budget and the periodic financial statements of the Indigenous Fund;

(v) To elect members of the Board of Directors referred to in paragraph 3.3 and to delegate to the Board such powers as may be necessary for the functioning of the Indigenous Fund;

(vi) To approve the technical and administrative structure of the Indigenous Fund and appoint the Technical Secretary;

(vii) To approve special agreements enabling non-member States, as well as public and private organizations, to co-operate with or participate in the Indigenous Fund;

(viii) To approve any amendments to the Agreement establishing the Fund and submit them to the member States for ratification, where appropriate;

(ix) To terminate the operations of the Indigenous Fund and appoint liquidators.

(e) Meetings. The General Meeting shall hold a regular meeting once a year and shall hold special meetings, whenever necessary, on its own initiative or at the request of the Board of Directors, in accordance with the procedures established in the rules of procedure of the General Meeting.

3.3 Board of Directors

(a) Composition. The Board of Directors shall be composed of nine members elected by the General Meeting and representing in equal proportions the Governments of States of the region that are members of the Indigenous Fund, the indigenous peoples of those same member states and the Governments of other member states. Members of the Board of Directors shall serve for a two-year term, preferably following a system of rotation.

(b) Decisions

(i) Decisions shall be taken by unanimous affirmative vote of delegates of States of the region that are members of the Indigenous Fund, together with a majority of affirmative votes of representatives of other member States and a majority of affirmative votes of delegates of indigenous peoples;

(ii) In order to be valid, decisions of the Board of Directors which concern a specific country must also be approved, through the most appropriate mechanisms, by the Government of the State concerned and by the recipient indigenous people.

(c) Functions. In accordance with the rules, regulations and guidelines approved by the General Meeting, the Board of Directors shall have the following functions:

(i) To propose to the General Meeting supplementary rules and regulations for fulfilling the objectives of the Indigenous Fund, including the rules of procedure of the Board;

(ii) To appoint a Chairman from among its members, using the voting procedures established in paragraph 3.3 (b) above;

(iii) To take the measures necessary for the implementation of this Agreement and of the decisions of the General Meeting;

(iv) To evaluate the technical and administrative needs of the Indigenous Fund and propose the corresponding measures to the General Meeting;

(v) To administer the resources of the Indigenous Fund and authorize the allocation of credits;

(vi) To submit to the General Meeting for consideration the proposed annual programme and budget and the periodic financial statements of the Indigenous Fund;

(vii) To consider and approve programmes and projects eligible for support from the Indigenous Fund, in accordance with its objectives, rules and regulations;

(viii) To arrange for and provide technical assistance and the support required for the preparation of projects and programmes;

(ix) To promote and establish mechanisms for consultation and agreement among member States of the Indigenous Fund, co-operating entities and recipients;

(x) To propose to the General Meeting the appointment of the Technical Secretary of the Indigenous Fund;

(xi) To suspend the operations of the Indigenous Fund temporarily until such time as the General Meeting has had an opportunity to examine the situation and take the relevant measures;

(xii) To exercise the other powers conferred on it by this Agreement and to perform such functions as may be assigned to it by the General Meeting.

(d) Meetings. The Board of Directors shall meet at least three times a year, in April, August and December, and shall hold special meetings whenever it deems necessary.

Article 4
Administration

4.1 Technical and administrative structure

(a) The General Meeting and the Board of Directors shall determine and establish the technical and administrative management structure of the Indigenous Fund, in accordance with articles 3.2 (d) (vi) and 3.3 (c) (iv) and (x).This structure, hereinafter referred to as the Technical Secretariat, shall be made up of persons who are highly qualified in terms of professional training and expertise; this staff shall consist of no more than 10 persons — six professionals and four administrative staff. Additional staffing requirements for projects may be met by recruiting temporary staff.

(b) Should it deem necessary, the General Meeting may expand or alter the composition of the Technical Secretariat.

(c) The Technical Secretariat shall function under the direction of a Technical Secretary appointed in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (a) above.

4.2. Management contracts. The General Meeting may authorize the signing of management contracts with entities that have the resources and expertise to undertake the technical, financial and administrative management of the resources and activities of the Indigenous Fund.

Article 5
Co-operating entities

5.1. Co-operation with entities which are not members of the Indigenous Fund. The Indigenous Fund may sign special agreements, approved by the General Meeting, allowing non-member States, as well as public and private, local, national and international organizations, to contribute to the capital of the Fund, participate in its activities, or both.

Article 6
Operations and activities

6.1. Organization of operations. The Indigenous Fund shall organize its operations according to a system of classification by programme and project area, in order to facilitate the concentration of administrative and financial efforts and the programming by means of periodic financial statements that will permit the fulfilment of its specific objectives.

6.2. Recipients. The direct, exclusive recipients of programmes and projects supported by the Indigenous Fund shall be the indigenous peoples of Latin American and Caribbean States which are members of the Fund or have signed a special agreement with the Fund enabling their country's indigenous peoples to participate in its activities, in accordance with article 5.

6.3. Criteria for eligibility and priority. The General Meeting shall adopt specific criteria for determining the eligibility of applicants to and recipients of the Indigenous Fund in an interdependent manner, taking into account the diversity of its recipients, and for establishing priorities among programmes and projects.

6.4. Funding conditions.

(a) Taking into account the diverse and particular characteristics of the potential recipients of programmes and projects, the General Meeting shall establish flexible parameters to be used by the Board of Directors in determining funding modalities and establishing conditions for the execution of each programme and project, in consultation with the parties concerned.

(b) In accordance with the criteria mentioned, the Indigenous Fund shall grant non-reimbursable resources, credits, guarantees or other appropriate funding modalities, or combinations thereof.

Article 7
Evaluation and follow-up

7.1. Evaluation of the Indigenous Fund. The General Meeting shall periodically evaluate the overall functioning of the Indigenous Fund, according to whatever criteria and methods it deems appropriate.

7.2. Programme and project evaluation. The progress of programmes and projects shall be evaluated by the Board of Directors. Special consideration shall be given to requests to that end made by the recipients of such programmes and projects.

Article 8
Withdrawal of members

8.1. Right to withdraw. Any member State may withdraw from the Indigenous Fund by giving written notice to the Chairman of the Board of Directors, who shall notify the Secretariat of the United Nations accordingly. Withdrawal shall take effect one year from the date on which such notification is received.

8.2. Liquidation of accounts.

(a) Member States' contributions to the Indigenous Fund shall not be refunded in the event of their withdrawal.

(b) A member State which has withdrawn from the Indigenous Fund shall remain liable for any sums owing to the Fund and for any obligations entered into with it prior to the date of termination of its membership.

Article 9
Termination of operations

9.1. Termination of operations. The Indigenous Fund may terminate its operations by decision of the General Meeting, which shall appoint liquidators and decide on the settlement of debts and the proportional distribution of assets among its members.

Article 10
Legal Personality

10.1. Legal status.

(a) The Indigenous Fund shall have legal personality and full powers to:

(i) Conclude contracts;

(ii) Acquire and transfer movable and immovable property;

(iii) Accept and grant loans and donations, offer guarantees, buy and sell securities, invest funds not committed for its operations and carry out the financial transactions necessary for the fulfilment of its purpose and functions;

(iv) Bring legal or administrative proceedings and appear in court;

(v) Take any other action required for the performance of its functions and the fulfilment of the objectives of this Agreement.

(b) The Fund shall exercise these powers in accordance with the legal requirements of the member State in whose territory it is conducting its operations and activities.

Article 11
Immunities, exemptions and privileges

11.1. Granting of immunities. Member States shall take, in accordance with their legal system, the measures required to confer on the Indigenous Fund the immunities, exemptions and privileges necessary for the fulfilment of its objectives and the performance of its functions.

Article 12
Amendments

12.1. Amendments to the Agreement. This Agreement may be amended only by unanimous agreement of the General meeting, subject, where necessary, to ratification by the member States.

Article 13
General Provisions

13.1 Headquarters of the Fund. The headquarters of the Indigenous Fund shall be at La Paz, Bolivia.

13.2 Depositaries. Each member State shall designate its central bank as depositary, so that the Indigenous Fund can maintain its disposable and other assets in the currency of that member State. If the member State does not have a central bank, it shall designate, in agreement with the Indigenous Fund, some other institution for that purpose.

Article 14
Final provisions

14.1 Signature and acceptance. This Agreement shall be deposited with the Secretariat of the United Nations, where it shall remain open for signature by representatives of Governments of States of the region and other States wishing to become members of the Indigenous Fund.

14.2 Entry into force. This Agreement shall enter into force when the instrument of ratification has been deposited, in accordance with paragraph 14.1 of this article, by at least three States of the region.

14.3 Denunciation. Any member State which has ratified this Agreement may denounce it by sending official notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The denunciation shall take effect one year after the date of its registration.

14.4 Commencement of operations

(a) The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall convene the first meeting of the General Meeting of the Indigenous Fund as soon as this Agreement enters into force in accordance with paragraph 14.2.

(b) At its first meeting, the General Meeting shall take the necessary measures to appoint the Board of Directors, as provided in paragraph 3.3 (a) of article 3, and to determine the date on which the Indigenous Fund is to commence its operations.

Article 15
Transitional provisions

15.1 Interim Committee. Once this Agreement has been signed by five States of the region, and without this giving rise to obligations for States that have not ratified it, an Interim Committee shall be established with composition and functions similar to those described for the Board of Directors in paragraph 3.3 of article 3 of this Agreement.

15.2 Under the direction of the Interim Committee, a Technical Secretariat shall be established as indicated in paragraph 4.1 of article 4 of this Agreement.

15.3 The activities of the Interim Committee and the Technical Secretariat shall be funded by voluntary contributions from States that have signed this Agreement and by contributions from other States and entities, through such technical co-operation and other forms of assistance as States or other entities may arrange with international organizations.

United Nations A/72/233

General Assembly

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Seventy-second session

Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the seventy-second session

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Letter dated 10 October 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour to request the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation" in the agenda of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

Pursuant to rule 20 of the rules of procedure, please find attached an explanatory memorandum justifying the urgency of my request (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Bernard **Tanoh-Boutchoue**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Explanatory memorandum

In paragraphs 23 and 24 of resolution 69/317, adopted by the General Assembly on 10 September 2015 at the 102nd plenary meeting of its sixty-ninth session, the Assembly:

> *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session on the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation;
>
> *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-first session, under the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations", the sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation".

United Nations A/72/234

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Seventy-second session

Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the seventy-second session

Impact of exponential technological change on sustainable development and peace

Letter dated 16 October 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour to request you to include in the plenary General Assembly agenda the additional item entitled "Impact of exponential technological change on sustainable development and peace".

Since this rule states that additional items of an important and urgent character proposed for inclusion during the regular session may be placed on the agenda if the General Assembly so decides, I am annexing an explanatory memorandum for consideration at the next meeting of the General Committee on 23 October 2017.

(*Signed*) Juan José **Gómez Camacho**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Mexico

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Annex

[Original: English]

Explanatory memorandum

The present submission provides an explanation as to why the item entitled "Impact of exponential technological change on sustainable development and peace" should be addressed by the General Assembly in the plenary.

The justifications are as follows:

1. The multisectoral and multi-disciplinary impact of exponential technological change;
2. The need for multi-stakeholder support and multi-agency engagement in the field of exponential technologies;
3. The need to discuss the opportunities and challenges of exponential technological change for sustainable development and peace in the plenary of the General Assembly, in the light of its universal membership

1. The multisectoral and multidisciplinary impact of exponential technological change

Over the past 10 years, there has been accelerated growth in several areas of research that have had positive and negative repercussions in every sector, dimension and field; from the highest levels of innovation in strategic areas to the most basic aspects of everyday life, in all the countries of the world. But while exponential technologies move at a three-dimensional speed, our organizations, institutions and societies are still moving in a linear fashion and have not adapted accordingly.

One of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations is the promotion of social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. To this aim, scientific and technological progress should be used for the benefit of all humankind, to promote the sustainable economic and social development of all States and for peaceful purposes.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. It has also recognized that the spread of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and global interconnectedness have great potential to accelerate human progress, bridge the digital divide and develop knowledge societies.

Unlike other periods of great transformation, today the effects are global, immediate, deep and increasingly irreversible. Scientific and technological innovation has sped up across areas as diverse as ICTs, the Internet of things, automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, neurotechnology, biotechnology and energy technology. Many are interlinked, thereby mutually improving their own functions, which are projected to increase every day. Furthermore, all of them are forces for global political, economic and cultural change.

For instance, with respect to social progress, social media has revolutionized the way that people communicate, make decisions and socialize across the world, including in politics and business. It has inspired political mass movements, but also transmitted messages of hate. Global virtual communities have emerged during the

past few years, owing to mobile technology, online services and smart technology platforms. The digitization of the information age has also made the use of big data the most important tool for developing public policies. Unstoppable technological development and rapid urbanization — expected to reach 80 per cent of the global population by 2040 — have resulted in megacities that need to become smarter and use renewable energy more efficiently to be sustainable.

In the economic realm, artificial intelligence is leading to a new industrial revolution through the increased use of robotics, the Internet of things, three-dimensional printing, quantum computing, nanotechnology, autonomous vehicles and urban transportation, among others. Digitization and increased automation of economic activity, involving areas such as communications, online education, e-commerce, agriculture, health and capacity-building, are also having a dual impact on jobs: although they are replacing human capital, they are also making it possible for workers to provide goods and services in the global market at reduced costs through collaborative/sharing economies.

Rapid technological change is also having an impact on sustaining peace. Today, new technological tools are facilitating the collection of data, crisis mapping and crowdsourcing for conflict prevention and peace operations. But the use of super intelligence and unmanned technology in conflicts also increases the vulnerability of data and societies. Other threats come from the use of synthetic biology and nanotechnology for mass and conventional destruction. At the same time, challenges to cybersecurity and the increased use of drones and high-tech weapons reveal the need for the transparent and ethical use of big data and artificial intelligence.

Since technological changes are of a transnational nature, it will be impossible for a single country alone to effectively address these multidisciplinary challenges. However, Governments and the United Nations are widely seen as being behind the curve on many of these technological changes. Transversal and multisectoral "technology foresight" in policy planning to assess the potential impact of emerging technological developments on our societies and economies is needed. It is ultimately necessary for the General Assembly to guide this foresight and bring the principles of shared prosperity and universal solutions to exponential technologies, which can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Debate on this issue can also contribute to building a solid body of updated research on how automation, digitization and global connectivity might play out by 2030.

We have entered into the most disruptive era in our history, where the accelerated speed of technological change requires a multisectoral assessment, immediate action and long-term planning within the United Nations.

2. The need for multi-stakeholder support and multi-agency engagement in the field of exponential technologies

The exponential power and impact of technology in multiple sectors needs to be approached in an inclusive manner, in order to provide opportunities to all, accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals and devise effective ways to mitigate its challenges to progress and peace.

For this purpose, Governments are required to partner along with industries, academia and civil society to ensure that technology develops in a transparent, ethical and responsible manner that leaves no one behind and promotes the resilience of their workforce and societies.

In 2015, the Technology Facilitation Mechanism was launched within the framework of the 2030 Agenda to support the implementation of the Sustainable

Development Goals, in order to facilitate multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships through the sharing of information, experiences, best practices and policy advice among Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, more than 30 United Nations system entities and other stakeholders.

This new Mechanism, established pursuant to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, in 2015, is composed of a United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation, a collaborative multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and an online platform. In its two past sessions, the forum started to identify the impact of exponential technological change on sustainable development.

In June 2016, the first forum on science, technology and innovation noted in its summary that the technological revolution is having an impact on all disciplines and industries and on the world's economy; indicated that rapid advances in ICTs, energy technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology, neurotechnology and other technologies will affect all sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, construction and transportation; and suggested that taking advantage of those technologies to advance social and economic inclusion, as well as to promote environmental sustainability and peace, will require a transformation of our societies. It concluded that it is necessary to look beyond the coming 15 years, given that the transformations that are required have longer time horizons.

In 2017, the forum on science, technology and innovation continued this discussion and included a session on the theme "Emerging frontiers: evolving science, technology and innovation developments with implications for the Sustainable Development Goals", during which it was recommended that policymakers become aware of the potential effects of accelerating technological change, and that viable technology strategies should be elaborated in each country. It was also recommended that government policy should guide technological change towards sustainable development, help mitigate the negative effects of such change and promote broad access to the benefits of technology development, while adapting existing technologies and promoting the diffusion of relevant knowledge through the training of new generations of scientists and other capacity-building services. Given the potential of these developments to have a significant impact on human well-being and sustainability around the world, a longer-term and systematic programme of work in a multi-stakeholder format was also proposed, so as to help to illuminate issues and provide guidance at various levels.

In the United Nations system, different entities have recently started to assess the impact of technological change, within their mandates in an individual manner, such as the World Intellectual Property Organization, which has initiated studies in follow-up to the 2010 report entitled "Foresight into the future of WIPO's development agenda"; the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, which addressed the theme "Foresight for digital development" in 2016, on which it will work further during its session in May 2018; the International Labour Organization, which initiated research in November 2016 on the theme "Making technology work for all" and, in August 2017, launched the Global Commission on the Future of Work to mark its 100-year anniversary in 2019; and the International Telecommunications Union, which convened in Geneva in June 2017 a global summit on the theme "Artificial intelligence for good". Other relevant United Nations entities include the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Internet Governance Forum.

At the regional level, for instance, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) commenced research on technological change in 2016, and hosted, with the Government of Mexico, a special session on artificial intelligence in April 2017, during the first forum of the Latin American and Caribbean countries for sustainable development. During that session, views were exchanged on opportunities and challenges related to the use of new technologies in the countries of the region, taking into account the global process, the sectors in which new technologies can be used and the potential benefits and costs. As part of its intergovernmental conclusions, the potential impacts of exponential technological change and automation were recognized and it was recommended that the secretariat of ECLAC continue to analyse the issue with a view to initiating a debate at the preparatory meeting for the sixth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santiago in August 2017, and to establishing a regional task force to elaborate recommendations for ongoing United Nations processes related to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Other United Nations processes that follow up on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals have also underscored the effects of exponential technological change. In July 2017, the high-level political forum on sustainable development acknowledged in its Ministerial Declaration both the transformative and disruptive potential of new technologies, in particular advances in automation, on labour markets and on the jobs of the future, with a view to preparing all societies and economies for these effects. The August 2017 report of the Secretary-General entitled "Fulfilling the promise of globalization: advancing sustainable development in an interconnected world" (A/72/301) indicated that more than 1.1 billion jobs have already been automated and estimated the loss of up to 2 billion jobs to robotics and digitization by 2030.

Finally, on 11 October 2017, at the joint meeting of the Second Committee of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the theme "The future of everything — sustainable development in the age of rapid technological change", participants highlighted the transnational nature of technological changes and the need to reflect on new forms of collaboration at the multilateral level and on multi-stakeholder approaches by Governments.

In sum, while multi-stakeholder approaches by each Government can bring together their respective private sectors, scientific communities and civil societies to elaborate integrated guidelines and frameworks, the United Nations can facilitate a multi-agency platform for all Member States, in particular for those countries in special situations, that may allow for transversal collaboration and sharing of information and best practices in the field of exponential technologies. In this regard, the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, which is mandated to include relevant technology actors, both within and outside the United Nations system, can be an axis for such a platform and bring its findings to the debate on this item to the plenary of the General Assembly.

3. The need to discuss the opportunities and challenges of exponential technological change for sustainable development and peace in the plenary of the General Assembly, in the light of its universal membership

Outside the United Nations, scientists and other organizations like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Bank have identified positive and negative effects of exponential technologies on sustainable development and peace over the past few decades.

Many see in them the solutions to hunger, poverty, social inclusion, resource scarcity, disease and environmental deterioration, that will free people from repetitive, undignified and dangerous jobs through new occupations, including distance or mobile work; boost economic growth through qualitative technological leaps in more advanced and affordable technologies over the next few decades in different sectors, in particular in agriculture, where innovation is increasing productivity and climate-smart solutions for food security; and foster knowledge, cultural understanding, mutual collaboration, global identity and the empowerment of ordinary people as the most important agents for economic and social progress.

Other experts fear mass unemployment and less demand for routine and manual tasks, increased inequality and conflict, structural deflation and the collapse of governance systems, as well as irrational, belligerent or negligent applications that may lead to social tragedies and catastrophes and raise ethical questions regarding advancements which, if not addressed, risk undermining existing societal norms.

In any case, there is an urgent need for the international community to be updated on the latest developments regarding technological changes, so that they may be applied in order to speed up efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and sustaining peace. It is also the duty of all Governments to assure that technology is used as a tool to solve major challenges and for peaceful purposes. Governments and multilateral organizations also need to reflect on new forms of collaboration in view of rapid technological change.

Exponential technologies are relevant to the United Nations and all of its members, owing to their growing impact on the economic, social and political issues pertaining to sustainable development and peace. The United Nations system should review the diverse effects of scientific and technological progress and focus on identifying options to harness the potential of emerging technologies. We can plan for the future at United Nations Headquarters with a cross-cutting view and start to collect, analyse and disseminate information in order to issue appropriate recommendations and policy guidance at the multilateral level.

Conclusion

In the light of the justifications set out above, the impact of exponential technological change on sustainable development and peace should, therefore, be included in the agenda of the plenary of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, thereby starting the discussion.